

Build Indiana funds assist local community projects

The Build Indiana Fund grant program is designed primarily to assist Indiana communities in financing construction projects that address a wide variety of important needs (e.g. social services, infrastructure, public safety, economic development, recreation, etc.). It is the most flexible source of state funded community assistance in Indiana.

The Build Indiana Fund is funded solely by the state's share of profits from authorized lottery and gaming activities. After all other commitments, which include: Teacher's Retirement Fund (\$30 M/Yr); Local Police and Firefighters Pension Relief (\$30 M/Yr); Auto Excise Tax Replacement (\$120 M to \$200 M/Yr); and Indiana Technology Fund (\$38 M/Yr).

Build Indiana Fund local projects are usually included in the biennial budget bill. New projects can only be authorized during a legislative session.

Once the project has an appropriation and is ready to proceed (i.e., other funding is secured, monies have actually been spent, bids have been solicited, or the project is substantially completed), the legislator responsible for the appropriation must request the project be placed on the State Budget Committee agenda.

Over the past two years, local cities and towns in Senate District 19 have received over \$2,300,000. Senator David Ford and State Representatives Mike Ripley, Eric Turner, Dean Young and Jeff Espich urged the legislature to fund these projects which were included in the 1999 state budget.

If you would like to apply for a future grant from the Build Indiana Fund for a local government project please download the application at /[www.state.in.us/legislative/senate\\_republicans/BifApp.html](http://www.state.in.us/legislative/senate_republicans/BifApp.html), or call Ford's Statehouse office toll free at 1-800-382-9467.


Senate District 19 Build Indiana Fund Projects			
Eaton public library project	90,000	Fairmount--Scott Opera House	25,000
Van Buren town hall	125,000	Zanesville municipal building	25,000
Adams County EMS	5,000	Monroe Youth League	10,000
Decatur women's shelter	25,000	Fairmount Historic Museum	25,000
Fairmount community building	75,000	Van Buren Volunteer Fire Dept. pumper tanker	125,000
Bryant Volunteer Fire Dept. station improvements	75,000	Chester Twp. fire station	100,000
Chester Twp. fire truck	125,000	Geneva - turnout gear	15,834
Jackson, Licking, Washington twps. pumper truck	125,000	Alexandria comm. center	50,000
Madison Co. 4-H fairgrounds	10,000	Berne - new fire station	100,000
Bluffton, sidewalks	50,000	Wells County Courthouse restoration	25,000

State Senator David Ford  
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If you or a family member would like to receive a certificate honoring a birthday, anniversary or any celebration please feel free to contact Sen. Ford at 1-800-382-9467.

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DISTRICT 19



Education roundtable works to improve standards

Created by the General Assembly in 1999, Indiana's Education Roundtable serves to improve education for Hoosier students.

Comprised of educators, parents, legislators and business leaders, the Education Roundtable is working aggressively to improve academic standards in grades K-12. Members have made changes in the ISTEP+ program by cutting the testing time in half and adopting better ways to benchmark state scores against national results. They are continuing to work on ways to improve the learning curve, enhance students' background needs, and establish accountability.

The most significant accomplishments to date are resolutions passed by the Roundtable to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), participate in the Third International

Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), eliminate norm-reference testing (NRT), eliminate the cognitive skills index (CSI), and adopt Academic Standards 2000 for Language Arts and Mathematics. A separate resolution calls for a two-year phase in period of the tough new standards for lower grades and a four-year phase in for those taking the Graduation Qualifying Exam.

In addition to the expertise of its members, the Roundtable has enlisted the help of nationally renowned experts in an effort to reach the most informed decisions.

The Roundtable has also actively sought the thoughts and opinions of parents throughout the state. Roundtable meetings are open to the public and additional input is encouraged via the Roundtable website at [www.che.state.in.us/roundtable](http://www.che.state.in.us/roundtable).

National Guard offers grants for college tuition

As a result of an appropriation by the Indiana General Assembly, the Indiana National Guard has established a supplemental grant program for guardsmen and women who desire to attend an Indiana institution of higher learning. In certain instances, tuition will be paid for either a full-

time or part-time enrollment. *College students in an officer-producing program can be awarded up to \$1100 per month.* These new programs for the National Guard are offered to make the Guard a more attractive organization in which to serve others and further one's education at the same time.

Indiana Family College Savings Plan: save and learn

To increase access to higher education for Hoosier families, the Indiana Legislature created the Indiana Family College Savings



Plan (IFCSP). The plan is designed to encourage families to begin saving and investing for their children's education early and to decrease the financial strain when the child enters a college, university or vocational-technical school.

The IFCSP offers state and federal tax

deferral, multiple savings options, convenient methods of contributing, and the flexibility to use the savings for expenses at any accredited higher-education institution world-wide. *An account can be opened with as little as \$50 and contributions of \$25 or more can be made any time thereafter.*

This fall, Peyton Manning will appear in public service announcements to increase awareness of the IFCSP, which currently has more than 4,800 participants.

To learn more about saving for the cost of higher education, access the IFCSP web site at [www.incollegesave.com](http://www.incollegesave.com) or call toll-free 1-888-814-6800.

Inside this issue:

Legislators "Back to School"	Pg. 2
Community College of Indiana	Pg. 2
Reassessment Footdragging	Pg. 2
Interim Study Committees	Pg. 3
Prescription Drugs for Seniors	Pg. 3
Build Indiana Funding	Pg. 4



## Crossroads 2000, finances state highway construction

Road construction seems to be a constant part of the spring and summer months, and sometimes it makes you wonder if these delays and detours are really worth the trouble.

In 1997, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) presented to the General Assembly a list of 104 major highway improvement projects ready for construction between the fiscal years of 1998 and 2002. This aggressive list of projects became known as the "Crossroads 2000 Program." The General Assembly responded by establishing the Crossroads Fund and authorized an expansion of highway bond financing. This combination of funding is allowing the state to fund the majority of the Crossroads 2000 Program, which will provide Indiana with improvements to many areas that are not normally included in the state's construction budget.

Indiana's annual highway budget, strengthened by the Crossroads 2000 Program and increased federal funding, now tops \$1.1 billion. In 1998 the total cost of projects was \$609.4 million, in 1999 total project costs equaled \$689.1 million, and the projected cost for 2000 and 2001 is \$681 and \$737 million, respectively. All of this money goes toward bridge replacement or rehabilitation, interstate resurfacing, new construction and measures to improve safety, roadsides, and parks.

Hoosiers can also look forward to some new

projects in the works, with the help from some federal dollars as well. The much talked about I-69 Project from Evansville to Indianapolis has been discussed in meetings throughout the state. The US 24 'Fort to Port' Project is seeking to improve the operational characteristics of US 24 between Fort Wayne and Toledo, OH. The Ohio River Bridges Project is the largest bi-state transportation project ever undertaken by Indiana and Kentucky. This project is a three-year effort to develop a comprehensive, detailed environmental assessment of various transportation options to connect Louisville and Southern Indiana. Finally, the Lafayette-to-Logansport section of the Hoosier Heartland Highway is the final link in the state's plan for a transportation corridor that will stretch 99 miles from Lafayette to Fort Wayne. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide for safer, more convenient travel and create new transportation links.

There are 93,000 total miles of highway in Indiana, and approximately 11,300 of those miles are on the state highway system. Consistently trying to improve traffic flow, level of service, reduce travel times, improve roadway safety, and accommodate future economic growth in all regions is a tough task.

If you are interested in finding more information about these projects and the work that INDOT is doing you can find it on their website at <http://www.state.in.us/dot/> and <http://www.state.in.us/dot/studies.htm>.

## Community College of Indiana opens new doors to learning

Hoosiers living in or near four Indiana cities now have a new option for higher education --- the Community College of Indiana.

The Community College of Indiana is a partnership between Ivy Tech State College and Vincennes University offering two-year associate's degrees, technical certificates and non-degree classes. The system combines Vincennes University's general education course offerings with Ivy Tech's technical programs and statewide accessibility.

The first-ever classes at CCI convened in late August at Ivy Tech campuses in Evansville, Lafayette, Gary and Indianapolis. Courses are expected to offered

at all 23 Ivy Tech campuses in six years.

CCI credits and degrees will transfer to Indiana, Purdue, Ball State, Indiana State universities and the University of Southern Indiana.

When the General Assembly created CCI, lawmakers froze tuition at \$66.20 per credit hour through 2005. Undergraduate tuition at Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis (IUPUI), by comparison, was \$114.40 per credit hour for the 1999-2000 academic year.

For more information, call toll-free 1-888-489-5463 or visit the Community College of Indiana website at [www.ccindiana.net](http://www.ccindiana.net).

## Foot-dragging continues on property reassessment

Responding to an appeal from taxpayers to move forward with the long-overdue reassessment of property, Indiana Tax Court Judge Thomas Fisher on May 31 set a timetable aimed at ending the O'Bannon Administration's foot-dragging on reassessment.

"Further delay cannot be justified and will not be tolerated," stated Judge Fisher's order, which compels the administration to finish work on a revised

reassessment manual by June 1, 2001, and to complete the reassessment process by March 1, 2002.

The judge also ordered administration officials to report to him regularly on their progress toward meeting the deadlines.

The judge termed this order the administration's "one final opportunity to fulfill its duties."

## Senator Ford serves on interim study committees

Study committees and statutory committees are created by the legislature to examine issues of concern to Indiana in greater detail than is possible during the regular meeting time of the General Assembly. The committees study the issues assigned to them during the Summer and Fall, and then report findings and recommendations back to the legislature for further action.

Senator David Ford (R-Hartford City) will serve on the Commission on Courts, the Child Custody and Support Advisory Committee, the Interim Study Committee on Public Safety Issues, the Interim Study Committee on Juvenile Law and Restorative Justice Issues, and the Indiana State Fair Advisory Committee.

As the vice chair of the Corrections Matters Evaluation Committee, Senator Ford is focusing the committee's attention on the evaluation of the state department of correction with specific analysis of community corrections programs, the community transition program, and compensation and safety issues for correctional officers.

The Commission on Courts reviews, researches and reports on all requests for new courts or changes in jurisdiction of existing courts.

The Child Custody and Support Advisory Committee is responsible for reviewing the child support guidelines. The committee discusses all of the aspects pertaining to the child support guideline chart, including the actual costs of supporting a child, related to the age of



**Vice Chairman David Ford (right) and Senator Luke Kenley (R- Noblesville) listen to testimony during the Corrections Matters Evaluation Committee.**

the child.

Senator Ford also is working with the Interim Study Committee on Public Safety Issues. This committee is studying the need for traffic control indicators on police cars, uninsured motorists and uninsured motorists insurance, the mechanism to review unexplained child fatalities, and the fireworks industry in Indiana.

The Interim Study Committee on Juvenile Law and Restorative Justice Issues focuses on modifying the juvenile code to effectively address the rising juvenile crime rate; and examines the delivery of juvenile services to delinquent, abused, neglected and mentally ill children.

The Indiana State Fair Advisory Committee will serve as liaison between the State Fair Commission, the State Fair Board, and the General Assembly.

## Older Hoosiers to benefit from prescription drug assistance

A panel of experts now is in place to figure out the best use of the \$20 million set aside from Indiana's share of the tobacco settlement funds for prescription drug assistance for the low-income elderly.

These are the decision -making members of the Prescription Drug Advisory Committee called for in the new state law which earmarks the tobacco settlement funds. The panel consists of four legislative members and 11 lay members with expertise in senior citizen health and prescription drug issues.

Since mid-July, the committee has conducted four planning sessions and several town hall meetings around the state to receive input from Indiana residents. The committee is also studying programs currently underway in other states. In addition, many outside experts have been asked for input.

Some seniors already are eligible for prescription drug assistance through Medicaid. But to be eligible, a person must make



no more than \$528 in income a month, or \$785 per month for a couple. They must also have less than \$1,500 in assets, excluding a car, home and personal belongings.

The advisory committee must submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than September 1, 2000. According to Katie Humphreys, secretary of the Family and Social Services Administration, it is unknown if some seniors will receive benefits from the program this calendar year.

[Among the issues the committee must address in developing the recommendation are:](#)

- Eligibility criteria;
- Cost sharing requirement;
- Benefit structure; and
- Marketing and outreach strategies.

[Other decisions the panel must make:](#)

- Should the program serve a lot of people with lesser benefits or fewer people with larger benefits?
- Should there be benefit limits, co-payments, deductibles and annual fees?